

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina Office of the Governor

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GOV. EASLEY ANNOUNCES 2007 VISITOR SPENDING RISES ACROSS NEARLY ALL N.C. COUNTIES *State Spending by Domestic, International Visitors Jumps to \$17.1 Billion*

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley announced today that visitor spending for 2007 increased 7.4 percent across North Carolina to \$17.1 billion. Ninety-four of the state's 100 counties saw increases in spending, including six counties with double-digit increases, according to statistics released today by the N.C. Commerce Department's Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development.

"Our very important state tourism industry continues to grow, even as the national economy is struggling," said Easley. "Tourism is a key economic driver, particularly for several of our rural and urban counties, and plays a critical role in adding new jobs to our economy and supports our other economic development efforts."

Domestic and international visitors to and within North Carolina spent a record \$17.1 billion in 2007. Domestic traveler expenditures reached \$16.5 billion, up 7.2 percent from 2006 while total direct international travelers' expenditures increased to \$607 million, a 13.2 percent jump from the previous year.

Visitor expenditures directly generated 198,900 jobs and nearly \$4.2 billion in payroll income within North Carolina in 2007. Employment increased 2.2 percent and payroll jumped 4.3 percent from 2006. Visitor spending in the state also directly generated close to \$2.7 billion in tax revenue for federal, state and local governments in 2007, up 4.6 percent from 2006.

The visitor spending figures come from an annual study commissioned by the Tourism Division and conducted by the Travel Industry Association. The study uses sales and tax revenue data plus employment figures to determine the overall impact of visitor spending in North Carolina.

Other highlights of the study include:

- Mecklenburg County led all North Carolina counties in tourism revenue, receiving more than \$3.4 billion in domestic travelers' expenditures. Wake County ranked second with nearly \$1.5 billion, followed by Guilford County with close to \$1.1 billion.
- 33 counties each received more than \$100 million in domestic travelers' expenditures in 2007.
- 33 counties reported 1,000 or more jobs directly supported by domestic travelers during 2007.
- Nash County had the largest percentage increase in visitor spending, a 12.7 percent gain or \$25 million. Of the state's larger tourism destinations, Wake County showed the greatest increase, 10.7 percent or \$143 million.

A list of counties and expenditures is attached. For more tables and information about the travel impact numbers, please visit <http://www.VisitNC.com>, or contact the Commerce Department's Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development at 919-733-7420.

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